

critical digest

139 East 47 St. NY 17 NY
EL 5-6894 T. M. Kraus



Aug 1, 1956 Vol VIII No 21 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter \$25 year \$6.50 quarter

This Week

Three for All-
Carn. Recital Hall
154 W 57 St., Paul
Draper, David All-
en and Milt Okum.
Norman Seaman is
producer. Wed &
Thur Only.

Taming of the
Shrew-East River
Amphitheatre 8/3.
Shakespeare Thea-
tre Workshop. Fri
& Thur only.

Ghosts-Modern
Theatre-15 Second
Ave 8/3.

Next Week

Hotel Excelsior-
Provincetown 8/7.
New comedy by Hans
Holzer produced by
TSR Theatre Co.
With Gaye Boyer.

No Exit-Theatre
East-211 E 60 St/14.
Newhall & Weigert
producers. Revival.

Picture of Dor-
ian Gray- Bleecker
St 145 Bleecker 8/16

Digests of Current Comments on Summer Shows

Welcome Darlings-Tallulah Bankhead's strawhat revue which debuted at Westport, Conn, was panned by 3 critics for its poor material, though the star herself was okayed. Herridge, Post, is sure it shouldn't be hard to find better material for star. Would that her vehicle of items pasted together from the late Ziegfeld Follies were as sturdy as Miss B, added Peper, World Telegram & Sun. Okay for summer houses, but not sturdy enough material for NY is how Dou, Variety, summed up the proceedings. Supporting cast of 8, headed by James Kirkwood, were listed as pleasant by tric of reviewers... Sticks and Stones, Hermione Gingold revue, will have to go considerable paring and polishing prior to NY try, Hank, Variety, noted after Easthampton, LI, viewing.

Susan and the Stranger, new Robert Nathan play which debuted at Mt. Kisco, NY, is dated, surface whimsy for summer fare only, panned Herridge, Post... What's The Rush, a revue with Robert Q Lewis, is a good bet for most silos especially where the audience likes its humor in broad doses, reports Dave, Variety, at Hinsdale, Ill, debut... Lentil, new Linnell Jones play with Jenny Hecht which played at Boston, Mass, Summer Theatre, panned by Variety mugg as the most unsympathetic group of characters yet assembled.

Hits Revisited

A Hatful of Rain with Vivian Blaine in the Shelley Winters role remains a powerful theatre piece, reports Holl, Variety. Though new lead appears too attractive, she is wholly believable, and contributes a sensitive and poignant performance. Harry Guardino, who has replaced Anthony Franciosa, was tabbed a new Broadway find by Variety mugg. Guardino creates a flawless characterization, excellently bridging the comedy and dramatic elements.

Summer Tryouts

Dead on Nine, new mystery by Jack Bopplewell, tries out at Dennis, Mass Aug 6 and East Hampton, NY, Aug 13 with Barbara Britton... The Golden Egg, comedy by Philip King, debuts at Ogunquit, Maine, Aug 6 and Coonamessett, Mass, Aug 13

70 cent student tickets to NYC legit shows will be available next season. The League of NY Theatres adopted Kermit Bloomgarden's suggestion of reserving 25 such seats for each performance, the seats will be in the second balcony and usually sell for \$1.80 and \$2.40.

Plays

O'Casey's Pictures in the Hallway presented last season at YMHA will be presented in special Sunday performances at Playhouse starting Sept 16... Rodgers and Hammerstein will join Lindsay and Crouse in adapting latter's Life With Father to a musical... John C. Wilson will present Feathered Fauna comedy at Golden in Oct... Fanny to start tour on Dec 15... Waiting for Godot opening due Oct 14 at Golden postponed, and will be seen again later in season at Booth... Michael Myerberg will present Ballad of Baby Doe, now at Central City, Colo.

Players

Mary McCarty joined Fallen Angels as co-star... Alex Nicol returned to Cat On Hot Tin Roof with star billing... Myron McCormick returned to No Time for Sergeants after 2 week honeymoon... Fredric March and Florence Eldridge will star in Long Day's Journey into Night... Fernando Lamas will make NY debut in Happy Hunting... Ward Morehouse named drama critic of Newhouse papers.

Playhouses

Bomb scare at Imperial, Most Happy Fella, at 8 45 PM Jul 26 emptied theatre for 50 minutes while NYC police searched. Phone call alerted police, but no bomb was found. Mirror reports half of audience did not return, Times reports only several of audience asked for refunds... Maxine Elliott, W 39, to be razed for new textile building... Ritz, W 48, sold by Shuberts to John Minary, and will probably not be used for legit.

Summer Playhouses

Taming of the Shrew will open at Stratford, Conn at Aug 5 matinee instead of Aug 5 evening performance... Westbury, LI, Music Fair presenting Sat. 6 PM and 9 30 PM performances... Farley Granger heads cast of A Question of Marriage, new play play by Steven Hill to be tested Aug 13 at Bucks County, Pa... Celeste Holm stars in new musical A Sudden Spring which debuts Aug 6 at Falmouth, Mass.

Other Broadways

An exchange of US and Soviet actors and productions being arranged by Billy Rose, currently in Moscow... A View From the Bridge banned in London, Arthur Miller plans to present it at club theatre in fall... Noel Coward's new comedy Nude With Violin debuts Sept 25 in Dublin... Brendan Behan's The Quare Fellow approved with reservations by London critics... Robert Morley is to star in London production of Fanny... Virginia Beach, Va. City Council voted \$35,000 for developing drama based on Virginia tidewater area to be presented next spring and summer.

Vaudeville

Frank Fontaine, Joe Morris & Barbara Barry, Barry Blake head Palace show.

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

"Long Before Shakespeare" series on CBS TV Saturdays at 2 PM features Dr. Casson, NYU, on Greek drama... "Cole Porter Festival" to be presented Oct 6 on CBS TV Ford Festival... "Born Yesterday" to be presented this season on NBC TV Hall of Fame... NBC-TV still trying to get Katharine Cornell for "Candida"... "Green Pastures" may also be presented on CBS TV Ford Festival.



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT

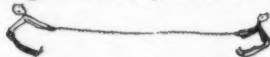
CRITICS MAIL PROBLEMS.... 3 stacks of letters to be answered by Kerr, Herald Tribune, were neatly taken care of in one Sunday article. The first pile consists of mimeographed questionnaires asking for 100,000 word answers to diverse drama theories. If ignored for a season the original purpose of the letter, he is convinced, is dead. The second group consists of explanations of Waiting for Godot for the critic. Instead of mailing his own views to each, the reviewer is considering exchanging letters, mailing out the different opinions to the different writers. The final stack asks why US critics don't read advance manuscripts or attend rehearsals. He has tried both and find they do not aid at all... A reviewer receives more complaining letters for so-called soft notices than for tough one, Variety editorial notes.

ROMAN LEGIT.... No new plays in Rome, reports Watts, Post. He viewed the outdoor production of Plautus' Casina at Ostia but found it filled with unfunny stock characters. Italy regards Ugo Betti as potentially the best playwright since Pirandello.

SHAW DEFENDED.... London Observer attacks on greatness of G. B. Shaw were answered Society of Authors luncheon. Group is trustee for Shaw's literary rights. St. John Ervine denounced the shallow common-minded people who belittle the main Rodin and Chesterton called a 'saint', NY Times reports. Lord Earl Attlee recalled the influence of Shaw on the early Socialists. Elmer Rice billed GBS as the most performed of any dramatist who ever lived, barring Shakespeare... In Chicago at the 100th anniversary of GBS birth Norman Thomas said that Shaw more than any other Briton influenced the change from the Victorian era to the welfare state in England today... Shaw estate collects \$2000 weekly from MyFair Lady, notes McHarry, News.

DRAMA MAIL BOX.... Author of a summer tryout covered by Variety complained that evening trade-paper reviewer attended was the worst performance of the week... Courtesy of actors who do not throw props at rude playgoers who leave show during curtain calls noted by C. D. subscriber.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES.... Once you've established yourself as an actress, you can do anything you want, Vivian Blaine, who entered Hatful of Rain, told Peper, World Telegram & Sun. Musical comedy star turned actress is down to 96 pounds and trying to gain a few to keep up her strength, Herridge, Post, discovered.



PROS & CONS BY TMK

Student ticket plan promised by League of NY Theatre members is a vital step forward in training new theatre-goers among NYC high school students. But it is a pity that only those with the good hearing and eyesight required to see the stage from the second balcony can take full advantage of the 70 cent seats offered.

If several of the summer tryouts don't make it to NY, you can't blame the summer theatre managers for trying. Several have packaged new shows and revues with the express purpose of trying them out on the strawhat circuit prior to NY production. This is a wise and profitable extension of summer theatre operation for all concerned.



OFF BROADWAY

Equity Library Theatre opens season Oct 17 with Daisy Miller, an adaptation of Henry James' novel. 15 plays will be presented by ELT at Lenox Hill Playhouse, E 70 and 4 shows will be presented as part of ELT Community Theatre project starting Feb 8 with Annie Get Your Gun.

Chekhov Comedies, Comrades, Man with Golden Arm and By Hex closed. . . Taming of Shrew will give 2 Sun. matinees at East River Amphitheatre Aug 5 & 12, plus evening performances Aug 3, 9-10, 16-17. . . Downtown Theatre, E 4, plans to present Arms and Man in Sept. . . No Exit will be revived Aug 14 at Theatre East, E 60, by Pat Newhall. . . "NEW" Theatre Company has leased Jan Hus House E 71 for a 40 week season starting Sept 25 with Take a Giant Step.

First US production of Wilde's Picture of Dorian Gray will be presented at Bleecker St. Theatre, 145 Bleecker Aug 16 by Kohlman, Milligan, and Armetta.

Affairs of Anatol, with each of its 7 episodes staged by a different director, has moved opening to Aug 15 at Directors Theatre, 225 W 46. . . Ibsen's Ghosts will be revived Aug 3 at Modern Theatre, 15 Second Ave.

YMHA Poetry Center will present a reading of Robert Thom's Children of the Light this fall. . . Bil & Cora Baird will present their children's puppet program Sept 1-9 at Playhouse at matinees only.



THEATRE

BOOK



COMMENTS

"The Kabuki Theatre" by Earle Ernst (Oxford) praised mildly by Priest, Herald Tribune, and Variety reviewers.

"The Dramatic Imagination" by Robert Edmond Jones (Theatre Arts), billed as a much needed reissue of the 1941 work by Rodo, Variety.



TV THEATRE

COMMENTS

Rosalinda, an adaption of "Die Fledermas" presented on NBC TV Producers Showcase, panned by NYC TV reviewers as tiresome and dull. A stale piece of strudel, summed up Shalit, News. Elaborate and expensive, added Shanley, Times.

THEATRE

RECORD

COMMENTS

"Arthur Miller Reading from 'Crucible' and 'Death of a Salesman' (Westminster) approved by Lask, Times, for living room and lecture room.

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